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ABSTRACT

This report on rules affecting the eligibility of the mentally retarded for interscholastic athletics uses as its source of information a survey of state high school athletic or activity associations. Excerpts from the replies are interspersed throughout the report which, in essay form, describes the overall rules and attitudes of these organizations over the country, then presents rationale for and against eligibility of retarded students, suggests criteria, and makes recommendations for states to consider where retarded students are not eligible for interscholastic athletics. Specific questions in the survey are reported to have focused on the following areas: a) criteria to determine eligibility of mentally retarded students, b) limitations placed upon their participation, c) rationale and reasons why they were denied opportunities to participate, d) plans being formulated to change rules to grant their eligibility, and e) differences in rules for mentally retarded students enrolled in special classes in regular schools and for those enrolled in special schools. The report indicates that in 44 percent of the states mentally retarded students were eligible and did participate; in 20 percent they were eligible on the basis of broad interpretation of association bylaws; and in 34 percent they were not eligible. (JA)

ED 083209

RULES AFFECTING THE ELIGIBILITY OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS:

A Survey of State High School Athletic Associations

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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SP 007 405

Project on Recreation and Fitness for the Mentally Retarded
American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation
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Early in the spring of 1967 a young girl traveled from a small mid-Texas town to Austin to participate in a statewide interscholastic bowling tournament. She had practiced long and hard so that she could make the team and represent her school in this competition. Her parents were concerned that the 1966-67 school year would be the last one in which she could represent her school as a member of the varsity bowling team since they had heard this activity was to be included in the program of the Texas University Interscholastic League which prohibits students enrolled in special education classes for the mentally retarded from participating in varsity interscholastic competition. Because this girl is mentally retarded, will an important avenue of education be denied her? Other mentally retarded boys and girls in Texas are similarly denied the opportunity to profit from participating in any kind of varsity interscholastic athletic or sport activity.

Assistance in attacking this problem was asked of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation's Project on Recreation and Fitness for the Mentally Retarded. Since only fragmentary information from a few states was on hand, the most logical and productive approach was to survey all state high school athletic or activity associations to determine national trends and specific procedures used in establishing the eligibility of the retarded.

On June 7, 1967, personal letters (Appendix A) and a one-page questionnaire (Appendix B) designed to obtain information about the procedures and practices followed in determining the eligibility of the mentally retarded were sent to the executive secretary or chairman of each state high school athletic or activity association in the fifty states and the District of Columbia. Specific questions focused on (1) the criteria to determine the mentally retarded student's eligibility; (2) any limitations placed upon their participation; (3) the rationale and reasons why they were denied the opportunity to participate in the program; (4) plans being formulated to change the rules to grant their eligibility; and (5) any differences in rules for the mentally retarded enrolled in special classes in regular schools and for those enrolled in special schools. A copy of the state association handbook, including the constitution and by-laws was also requested. Some of the early responses indicated that personnel in some states had given little thought to the retarded in establishing eligibility rules primarily because few retarded had been enrolled in senior high school buildings. In many localities the retarded were terminated in a junior high school building -- this in effect had eliminated the potential problem.

Answers on a number of questionnaires indicated that the retarded were eligible and were not denied the opportunity to participate in the interscholastic program. However, investigation of the by-laws in some of these states revealed that only the most liberal of interpretation of the subject, credit or unit rule enabled the retarded to satisfy the scholastic or academic requirements for eligibility. Others indicated that students could be certified as eligible by the principal of the school if in his judgement the individual was doing acceptable work consistent with his ability. This procedure was not specified in most of the association or league by-laws in states where it was indicated this procedure was being followed.

Consequently, follow-up letters (Appendix C) and questionnaires (Appendix D) were sent to the executive secretary in each of these states. In the letter it was noted that very few states had rules designed to prohibit the mentally retarded from participating in the interscholastic program. A youngster in a program where the classes are discrete entities, and where credits or units are given, has no problem in earning eligibility under existing by-laws. However, few special education programs for the mentally retarded are organized this way. For the most part these are self-contained units in which the curriculum is flexible and geared to meeting the specific needs of the individual. It is difficult to "stretch the point" that these classes can be interpreted in the same context as the traditional secondary school class or period. In some special education programs the students spend half-a-day in class work and the other half-day in a sheltered workshop or on a job under the jurisdiction of the school or workshop. This is the situation and the case for which rulings were sought. Additional information was requested about the authority under which exceptions to the letter of the by-laws were made (i.e., a section or interpretation within the by-laws themselves, result of special board action, or interpretation applied by the executive secretary). Methods of disseminating this information and in how it was communicated to local school officials were also requested.

This follow-up proved to be quite helpful in clarifying the procedures in those states where there had been inconsistencies between the answers on the questionnaires and the by-laws themselves. Of the twenty-four originally placed in the broad interpretation category, ten (41.7 per cent) did not change, ten (41.7 per cent) were changed to eligible , and four (16.7 per cent) were changed to not eligible. A second follow-up (Appendix E) was also sent to states from which no response had been received. Returns were received from fifty of the fifty-one state high school athletic associations, which represents 98 per cent of the questionnaires sent. Analysis of answers showed that these procedures fell into three categories. (Figure I) - (1) eligible, 44 per cent; (2) eligible on the basis of a broad interpretation of the by-laws, 20 per cent; and (3) not eligible, 34 per cent. Since the Executive Secretary of the California Association felt that this was a concern of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations, he did not respond to the questionnaire.

FIGURE I

Category	Number	Per Cent
Eligible	22	44.0
Eligible on the basis of broad interpretation of by-laws	10	20.0
Not eligible	17	34.0
Totals	49*	98.0*

* One state returned the questionnaire but felt that this was the concern of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations so gave no response to the questions.

In general, the mentally retarded can earn eligibility under one of three procedures: (1) by a special provision that is either written into the by-laws or upon a specific interpretation of the scholarship rule by the Board of Control, Executive Committee or Legislative Council of the respective state association; (2) through appeal procedures in which each case is decided upon its individual merits, or by which a local school's special education program for the mentally retarded is approved by the Board of Control, Executive Committee or Legislative Council as meeting the intent of the association's scholarship standard; and, (3) by having no scholarship or academic standard imposed on any student as a criterion for eligibility considering only such things as age, attendance, semesters of participation, citizenship, residence, amateur status, etc. *(While few states now operate with no scholastic requirements, it is interesting to note that several states with these rules have indicated that there has been discussion about abolishing grades as a criterion of eligibility for participation in the interscholastic program).*

Among the specific rules governing the eligibility of the retarded for interscholastic participation are:

> *If a student meets the qualification of the State Department of Education for special education, the scholastic requirement of one and one-half units is waived in order that the student be eligible to participate in athletics.*
>
> *Special classes - educable (I.Q. 50-80) - must pass 3/4 of the work assigned at their level. (It is not the intent of the high school league to make a student ineligible due to lack of (scholastic) ability. We question whether any student that is working at all up to capacity becomes scholastically ineligible).*
>
> *The program is approved by the State Department of Education for the educable mentally retarded; the child is classified as EMR by a psychological examiner approved by the State Department; the individual must be a member of a class for EMR which means that he must spend the greater part of each school day with other EMR children under a teacher holding a certificate to teach the EMR.*
>
> *Mentally retarded pupils classified as "ungraded" and enrolled in "special" or "opportunity" classes shall be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition when they are graded as "satisfactory" in three-fourths of their requirements and are approved by the principal as good citizens. The enrollment of a student in one of these classes must be approved by the Special Education Division of the Department of Public Instruction.*

No special mention is made in our interscholastic athletic rules to mentally retarded students nor do we feel that special reference should be made to this or other groups of handicapped children. It is our opinion that boards of education should, whenever possible, provide courses of instruction to meet the needs of all children and if the children do satisfactory work in these courses, the work should be acceptable for graduation purposes. It follows, therefore, that if handicapped children pass the courses designed for them, they should be permitted to use the credit earned for eligibility purposes on exactly the same basis as other children are permitted to use the credits which they earn.

Students must be certified as doing satisfactory work in the special education classes to which they have been assigned.

We have no special criteria for this student. He meets our regular criteria and if an exception is needed the principal makes the request to our Board of Control.

The mentally retarded are not mentioned in our constitution or eligibility rules. Our Executive Committee interprets the rules. Some years ago it voted that if a student in a class for the mentally retarded was accomplishing work satisfactory to his school, the student would be eligible.

In our by-laws, there is provision for appeal which is used. To date, this has been a better method of handling unusual cases than trying to write a lot of exceptions into the rules.

Only an age requirement; most school districts feel that retarded children never fail.

A boy who is making satisfactory progress in a school prescribed course as a member of a special slow-learning class may be exempted from the normal scholarship requirements.

Grading for these students is usually done on an "S" and "U" basis. It is most difficult to receive a "U" if student attendance is satisfactory and an effort is made. Our Board has further ruled that it shall be the judgement of the local administration as to effort extended by these students.

Program for exceptional students is referred to the Executive Committee for interpretation. (The Committee has taken under advisement each such request and in some instances has indicated they feel that the course offered meets the intent of the League scholarship standard but in other situations they have not reacted favorably).

Educable students enrolled in public education classes approved by the Department of Public Instruction may be eligible to represent attendance center of such special education classes providing they are making passing grades in 15 semester hours or equivalent and comply with all other regulations pertaining to eligibility.

Generally in those states where the scholarship rule is expressed in terms of satisfactory progress in a given number of hours per week (usually fifteen), the retarded are able to meet the standard. If a retarded student is showing satisfactory progress in the designated number of hours in a program designed to meet his individual needs he is considered to be meeting the intent of this rule. In other states, this is clarified further and made easier to interpret and administer with the addition of the words *"...or equivalent..."* after the number of hours, units, subjects, or other academic criterion.

The executive secretaries in those states in which the retarded are eligible for the most part feel that the system is working well and that there has been no difficulty with its implementation. Typical of these comments are:

We sincerely feel that this program has worked out quite well and the problems are not as great as one would think. We are happy to have followed the State Department of Public Instruction's recommendations.

We have had no trouble with this rule. In fact, one of our state's championship basketball teams had one of these boys which was well accepted by member schools in conferences and schools throughout the state.

In one state where the by-laws have recently been amended to permit the retarded to participate in interscholastic athletics, the Executive Secretary feels that a problem may be developing:

The problem that we now have is one of double academic standards for athletics. Some principals report problems because special education students are eligible while others who are not approved for special education have to do a high level of work and are unable to make the necessary grades to establish eligibility.

It appears that this problem as reported is not so much a problem in the rule, its interpretation or implementation, as it is one that revolves around the perpetuation of traditional and conventional ideas about education in general and about programs for the mentally retarded and athletics in particular.

The philosophy of another state, reported by its Secretary, is more in line with the education of all and equality of opportunity rationale underlying educational theory today:

> *With the present day philosophy of education, which states that every youngster has the right to all the education he can absorb, many of our schools are running a track program. This means that whether we call it the lower track, the bottom track or whether we say the track for youngsters of below average or normal mental ability is geared for them. If the school is honest in setting up the program and in its presentation, then the youngster in this track will have as much opportunity as the youngster in any track. This being the case, the youngster is a regularly enrolled member of the secondary school body and therefore is eligible to participate in any or all activities in which he can.*
>
> *In my statement about schools tracking a program, I said that if they were honest in setting the tracks and work is available at a level where the youngsters had a chance at success, there would be no problem. I assume that youngsters in the lowest track would be carrying work like youngsters in the highest track. The difference would be on the level of instruction. The youngster in the lowest track is not given eligibility. He has earned it as anyone has.*

As previously indicated 20 per cent of the responses were categorized as eligible through a broad interpretation of the written by-laws. In these cases the executive secretaries reported that the retarded were eligible to participate in the interscholastic program and that no restrictions or limitations were placed upon them. However, upon close examination of the by-laws there appeared to be no provision for those enrolled in special education programs - eligibility was in part determined by a scholastic requirement encompassing passing work in a certain minimum number of hours, units, credits, major subjects, solid subjects, or in regular high school work. The principal of the individual school was also charged with the responsibility of certifying the eligibility of each athlete. Evidently some principals interpret the scholarship rule broadly, while others in the same state enforce the rule to the letter. Consequently, a retarded youngster in a school where the administration gives a liberal interpretation to this rule will find himself eligible, while an individual in a school where the administration gives a stricter interpretation will find himself ineligible. An unwritten broad interpretation of the scholarship rule leads to problems and inconsistencies that are in fact unfair to all concerned and can result in embarrassing situations. The consensus of many coaches, athletic directors and principals, from some of the states, is that if the eligibility of a boy is questioned as in violation of the scholarship rule, strict interpretation of the by-laws will support the protest. Because of the possibility of association action against the school in these situations, and the potential effect that this can have upon athletes, students, parents, and the community itself, few principals in fact operate with such a broad interpretation of the by-laws. Questions arise

as to how much opportunity the retarded actually have to earn eligibility in these states and if the by-laws are such that the very fact one is in a special education class for the mentally retarded categorically denies him this chance.

In virtually all seventeen states where the retarded are denied eligibility the basic reason is in not satisfying the scholarship rule which is administered under a strict and literal interpretation. Some of the state rules and comments made by the various executive secretaries reflect this:

1. *Inability to satisfy academic minimums required of all students.*
2. *Academic requirements in retarded curriculum not in balance with those who are forced to meet higher standards.*

_____ has no rule which allows a pupil to participate without making a passing grade in a course which is of standard acceptable to other accredited schools to which a student must transfer or for college entrance.

Not eligible on any level for any team if they do not meet our regular requirements.

Any student in an ungraded special education class that would not receive credit toward graduation would be ineligible for interscholastic athletics.

Must pass three courses for which credit is given toward graduation. One course must be English, History, math or similar subject.

Our eligibility rules make no differentiation between scholastic requirements for any pupil as they must all meet a passing standard regardless of their situation.

. . . a passing average in each of at least three full-credit high school studies.

Our state association does not prohibit the mentally retarded from participating on athletic teams, provided they are carrying a sufficient academic load, and are receiving credits that count toward graduation.

Interscholastic athletics are for the privileged and the most highly skilled high school students. The privilege of participating must be earned by meeting minimum standards of eligibility. Only students who will receive diplomas are eligible. Special students as described do not receive diplomas.

Like other competitors they must do 15 hours of passing work in a secondary school that is a member of our league. If the special room was in an elementary school of if the work was not recognized as secondary, they could not compete.

Our rules provide that in order to be scholastically eligible to participate in interscholastic athletic competition, a boy must be doing passing work in a minimum of three high school subjects per week during the current semester and unless he is a beginning freshman, he must have successfully carried at least three high school subjects the previous semester. By a high school subject we mean any subject which is accepted by a local board of education in meeting the requirements for graduation.

Interesting provisions were noted in the by-laws of some states. In one state a special student is eligible for all activities under the jurisdiction of the state association except for athletic competition of any kind. In another state the retarded youngster may participate in athletics at any level except with the varsity or A team. Still another state explicityly excludes special students, listing them among those who are not eligible for participation in athletics of any kind at any level!

The rationale and fairness of rules that include such inconsistencies are questioned. Especially when statements like this are made:

We certainly would be taking a step backward if we allowed students to participate who were not even enrolled in regular academic courses.

Historically, eligibility rules of all high school state athletic associations provide for competition between teams composed of players who are capable of making passing marks in high school studies. Although no child can be expected to do better school work than his mentality will permit, it is questionable whether the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics should be extended to the mentally retarded.

Our schools have felt that a person who is not able to make a certain scholastic standard should not be allowed to represent his school. If the philosophy were adopted to make exceptions for special groups, then the League can forsee that soon the scholastic requirements would be dropped altogether.

Again, let me say we are not denying mentally retarded children the opportunity to participate because they are mentally retarded, but because they do not meet our eligibility standards.

... I believe firmly that participation in the interscholastic program should be reserved for those who earn the privilege. I recognize that many times and particularly in the case of retarded youngsters, it is not possible for them to earn this privilege in competition to other youngsters. This is unfortunate, although in many cases, it would seem to me that a retarded youngster would not want to display himself in the interscholastic program.

Anyone familiar with the development of state high school athletic associations and of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations is well aware of the situations and conditions that necessitated the formation of these regulatory groups. The unscrupulous practices "to win at any cost" are known facts; the lack or even absence of control exerted over teams and coaches is equally well known; the religious fanaticism of some communities over their teams is well documented; and the questionable educational value of the program is evident in reports and articles about interscholastic competition in that era. The need for stringent regulation and control over the athletic program at that time cannot be denied. The need for orderly conduct and administration of these programs today, equally, cannot be denied.

However, education and schools have changed and are continuing to change rapidly. When eligibility rules were established special education classes and programs were virtually non-existent in the schools. Consequently, there was little if any need to consider eligibility standards for the mentally retarded. Even today, in many parts of the country the retarded are terminated in a junior high school building. In these schools and systems there has been little need to consider how the eligibility rules affect the participation of the mentally retarded. But, there is a growing trend to place the retarded in buildings where they will be with other students more in line with their chronological ages. Increasingly, special education classes for the retarded are being established in senior high school buildings where these boys and girls are becoming aware of and interested in participating in the athletic program. This is an even greater problem in schools offering a comprehensive program with a wide variety of interscholastic activities at all competitive levels than in those schools that have more limited offerings. While some states have made changes in their by-laws or in their interpretations of them so that the retarded are not categorically denied an opportunity to participate, too many states have not done this. While there may not be many retardates who now are interested in interscholastic competition and there may not be many who currently have the ability to make the team, it is grossly unfair to deprive all of the retarded from having an opportunity to participate in any and all interscholastic sports and athletic activities. When given a chance to participate and when instruction is progressive and sequential, the sky is the limit for some of these youngsters. The door should not and cannot be shut on them -- we just give each his chance to shine!

So much of the argument to maintain the status quo is based on supposition and not substantiated by fact. So much of the retarded's problem is a reflection of our lack of expectation in them. They ask not for sympathy nor for anything special, but simply for opportunity and consideration in terms of their ability and potential. A mission of education is to encourage -- not discourage; to emphasize ability -- not disability, and to accentuate the positive -- not the negative. Since interscholastic athletics are considered an integral part of the educational program, this then is an important part of its mission. Rules and regulations, based on broad generalizations that categorically restrict or limit groups and/or individuals, are not consistent with this philosophy.

Undoubtedly the current situation regarding the eligibility of the retarded is affected and influenced by misconceptions, lack of information, emotional biases, and general negative attitudes about the mentally retarded. There are increasing reports of successful participation by the retarded in interscholastic athletic programs. Some of these youngsters have been named captains of their respective squads and in one case it is reported that a retardate gained all state honors! How can denial of the opportunity to participate in these programs and to make such significant personal achievements be justified because a bona fide mentally retarded child has been placed in a special education class?

If changes in rules and regulations are aimed at the bona fide special education student, all schools with these youngsters would be governed by the same eligibility standards. Enrollment in special education, according to state definition and criterion, would delimit those affected by the special amendments or sections. This would certainly be in line with educational philosophy that says we are concerned with the individual. Blanket legislation against the retardate's chance to take part in athletics belies this and re-enforces the charge of so many that modern secondary schools and their programs are designed for those who fit the mold or pattern.

Unfortunately, so much of athletic administration is concerned with football and basketball. However, the comprehensive athletic program includes many other activities, some of these among the most beneficial for the retarded. But, athletic association rules prohibit retardates from even being able to try track and field, wrestling, swimming, gymnastics, bowling, or any other activity under its jurisdiction. For many retardates, this could be a way of finding their place in the sun -- of responding to challenge, gaining interest, becoming more confident in himself, and in being more like his peers than different. We say that the retarded are more like their contemporaries than they are different. This, then, should be reflected in programing.

Appropriate legislative action to amend existing by-laws should be considered by the Executive Committee, Board of Control, or Legislative Council in each state so that there will be no doubt as to the procedures for bona fide mentally retarded students in recognized special education programs to follow in earning eligibility for participation in the interscholastic athletic program. Specifically:

1. In those states where the retarded are now definitely eligible, by-laws should be reviewed to evaluate their effectiveness and to identify any problems associated with the rule and its implementation.

2. In those states where the retarded are now eligible on the basis of appeal procedures, consideration should be given to amending by-laws so that definite procedures are established whereby the retarded may earn eligibility without the necessity of instituting an appeal to the Executive Committee, Board of Control, or Legislative Council.

3. In those states where the retarded are considered eligible on the basis of a broad interpretation of existing by-laws, definite procedures should be considered for inclusion in the by-laws so that there can be no doubt as to the ways in which the retarded may earn eligibility.

4. In those states where the retarded are not now eligible, addition of appropriate sections to the by-laws should be considered so that the retarded may earn eligibility.

In evaluating existing by-laws and in developing amendments designed so that the retarded may earn eligibility for participation in the interscholastic athletic program, certain factors need to be considered:

1. The individual should be enrolled in a school course at his level in a recognized special education program for the handicapped approved by the State Department of Education.

2. The individual should show progress consistent with his level and commensurate with his ability for the preceding semester (or other time unit prescribed by the state for student eligibility) though the classes are ungraded and not organized on the basis of discrete subjects or units.

3. The provisions of the by-laws should be consistent in permitting the retarded to earn eligibility in any and all activities at all competitive levels under the jurisdiction of the state high school athletic or activities association. The inconsistencies enumerated should be eliminated from the by-laws of those states where they are found.

4. The individual should meet all other rules for eligibility as stipulated in the by-laws of the respective states and with which other participants must comply. There is no intent in this recommendation to suggest that age, residence, attendance, semesters of participation, citizenship, amateur status, etc., rules should be any different for the retarded. The intent is to make the scholarship rule or academic standard consistent with the organization, administration, and content of secondary school special education programs so that a mentally retarded youngster placed in them will have the same opportunity as his non-retarded contemporary to earn eligibility for participation in any and all parts of the interscholastic athletic program.

A problem of implementation of these rules appeared as the questionnaires and by-laws were reviewed. In some states the retarded may earn eligibility on the basis of a special board interpretation or ruling for those sections of the by-laws dealing with scholastic or academic standards. However, definite procedures for

communicating and interpreting these special rulings to the principals, athletic directors and coaches were not well developed and defined. This means that in some states the rules are such that the retarded can earn eligibility but this information and the procedures are not adequately communicated to those actually conducting the program. Therefore, it is recommended that further consideration be given to:

1. The inclusion of procedures to inform those at the local level of the changes in the by-laws which will permit the retarded to earn eligibility for participation in the interscholastic athletic program. Procedures can include special notification from the executive secretary to principals, athletic directors, and coaches; appropriate changes in the handbook; information in periodic bulletins and newsletters; and any other method deemed appropriate by the respective state groups.

2. The inclusion of procedures to interpret the rule to all concerned in those states where the retarded can now earn eligibility. Those connected with athletic programs in schools with special education units should encourage the retarded to try out for teams and to carry them on squads when they make the team.

These procedures will not in fact mean exceptions to state association eligibility standards, but rather they will give a consistent, logical and fair means of enabling bona fide mentally retarded students to gain the eligibility that is now denied them in many states. Inconsistencies in interpreting and administering these rules will be minimized if not eliminated altogether.

In providing the richest and most complete experiences possible for each youngster, a prime consideration must focus on every attempt to meet the unique and special needs of the individual. Depriving these less fortunate youngsters of the opportunity even to try to earn a chance to participate in the interscholastic athletic program and to gain from the impact of this potent educational vehicle is difficult to justify. It is hoped that the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations and each of its members and affiliates will give careful consideration to the steps suggested herein as a means of eliminating this inequality.

ELIGIBLE

Alaska	Maine	Nebraska	Pennsylvania	Wisconsin
Hawaii	Maryland	Nevada	Tennessee	Wyoming
Idaho	Michigan	New Jersey	Vermont	
Iowa	Minnesota	New Mexico	Virginia	
Kansas	Missouri	Oregon	Washington	

BROAD INTERPRETATION

Arizona	Mississippi
Alabama	New York
Colorado	North Dakota
Connecticut	Rhode Island
Illinois	Utah

NOT ELIGIBLE

Arkansas	Georgia	Montana	South Carolina
Delaware	Indiana	New Hampshire	Texas
District of Columbia	Kentucky	North Carolina	West Virginia
Florida	Louisiana	Ohio	
	Massachusetts	Oklahoma	

NO RESPONSE

*California
South Dakota

* Questionnaire returned unanswered.

APPENDIX A

June 7, 1967

In the last few years increasing numbers of handicapped boys and girls have come into programs administered by our nation's secondary schools. About eighty per cent of these youngsters are mentally retarded. Some of these retardates are in regular classes while many others are enrolled in special education classes. An important aim of programs for the retarded is to provide each youngster with opportunities in which he can succeed and achieve to help him develop personal pride, confidence, and self-respect.

Recently inquiries have come to our Project concerning the status and eligibility of the mentally retarded in special education classes for participation in inter-scholastic athletics. A cursory investigation of several states indicates a variety of practices in use. After discussing the situation with Mr. Clifford Fagan, Executive Secretary of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations, Dr. Ross Merrick, AAHPER Consultant for the Division of Men's Athletics, Dr. Harvey Jessup, Vice President of the Division of Men's Athletics, and with people from several states, it was decided to conduct a survey of the respective states to determine what procedures and practices are followed in determining the eligibility of the mentally retarded for inter-scholastic sports.

Enclosed you will find this questionnaire. Please complete the questionnaire and send it back to us by return mail so that the results can be tabulated and analyzed prior to the July meeting of the National Federation in Honolulu. A copy of the completed survey will be sent to you.

Your courtesy and cooperation in assisting us with this project and in helping us to obtain this important information will be greatly appreciated.

Very sincerely,

Julian U. Stein
Director

Enclosure
cc: Mr. Clifford Fagan
Dr. Ross Merrick
Dr. Harvey Jessup

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF ELIGIBILITY PROVISIONS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS
UNDER STATE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION JURISDICTION

STATE: _____

Are mentally retarded students who are enrolled in special education classes eligible to compete in interscholastic athletics under the jurisdiction of your high school athletic association? Yes ____ No _____.

List the specific criteria used for determining a mentally retarded student's eligibility.

List any limitations that are placed upon the mentally retarded relative to sports or activities (e.g., restriction to levels of competition--junior varsity, "B", or freshmen; school levels--senior high, junior high; and specific sports or activities).

List reasons and rationale why the retarded are denied the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics.

List any plans that are now being formulated or processed to change the rules to enable the mentally retarded to engage in interscholastic athletics.

List any differences (e.g., eligibility, sports or activities, scheduling, etc.) between situations (a) in which the mentally retarded are enrolled in special classes in regular schools, and (b) in which the mentally retarded are enrolled in special schools.

_____
State High School Athletic Association

Note: A copy of your state association handbook, including the constitution and by-laws, would be helpful and appreciated.

APPENDIX C

M E M O R A N D U M July 5, 1967

TO:

FROM: Julian U. Stein

SUBJECT: Survey Eligibility of the Mentally Retarded for Interscholastic Sports

In tabulating the questionnaire we recently sent you regarding the way scholastic eligibility of the mentally retarded for interscholastic athletics is determined in your state, certain questions of interpretation have arisen. Rather than use our interpretation, we are contacting you again so that the exact ruling and procedure for your state will be included in the final tabulation and report.

Very few states have rules that are designed to prohibit the mentally retarded from participating in the interscholastic program. If the retarded youngster is in a program where the classes are discrete entities in which credits or units are given there is no problem in determining eligibility under existing By-Laws. However, few special education programs for the mentally retarded are organized this way. These are self-contained units in which the curriculum is flexible and geared to meeting the specific needs of the individual. It is difficult to stretch the point that these classes can be interpreted in the same context as the traditional secondary school class or period. In some special education programs the students spend half a day in class work and the other half-day in a sheltered workshop or on a job under the school or workshops supervision. This is the situation and the case for which we are seeking a ruling.

Specifically, is a mentally retarded student in a special education program of this type eligible to compete in interscholastic athletics under the By-Laws of your Association?

_____ No -- If no, just return this memorandum to us by return mail.

_____ Yes -- If yes, please answer the enclosed question and return to us by return mail.

Your cooperation and assistance to us in making sure the accuracy of this survey are greatly appreciated. A copy of the final report will be sent you as soon as it is completed.

Enclosure

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWER

Student must be certified by his principal or school that he is doing acceptable work consistent with his capacity.

BY-LAWS

Student must be passing a minimum of hours, units, credits, major subject, solid subject, or regular high school work.

QUESTION

On what basis (By-Laws, Board ruling, Executive Secretary interpretation) is the mentally retarded student certified as eligible to reconcile violation of a literal interpretation of this section of the By-Laws?

How is this information and interpretation communicated to local school officials?

Name _____

Association _____

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWER

Student is eligible at the discretion of the local school or if the standards are satisfactory to the school for the students concerned.

QUESTIONS

Is this an exception to the By-Laws of your State Association?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, this exception is --

_____ included in a section or interpretation within the By-Laws

_____ the result of special Board action or ruling

_____ interpretation applied by the Executive Secretary

_____ Other (specify)

Please send us a copy of the exact wording of this exception (Handbook, section from Handbook, interpretation, ruling, etc.).

Name _____

Association _____

APPENDIX E

M E M O R A N D U M August 2, 1967

TO:

FROM: Julian U. Stein

On June 7, 1967, a questionnaire was sent to you concerning the eligibility of mentally retarded youngsters to compete in inter-scholastic sports in your state. You are one of six states that has not replied to this questionnaire. We would like very much to include your state in our report. Enclosed you will find a copy of the questionnaire and letter which was sent to you. Would you please return the questionnaire to us by return mail so that we might complete our report. A copy of the final results will be sent to you.

Your prompt attention and cooperation in the above request are greatly appreciated.

Enclosures(2)